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27 Oct. 1967

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Records Administration Staff

THROUGH : Acting Chief, Information Requirements Staff

SUBJECT : Recommendations for Improving Records Management

1. Being a newcomer in your business I don't profess to be an expert on records management; nevertheless, I do have a few recommendations which hopefully could improve the records management system.

a. Everyone at the meeting was in agreement as to the immediate need for recognition by the higher echelons of the responsibilities and functions performed by the records management officers; I feel that it is equally important that this need be recognized by, or impressed upon, division heads, branch chiefs, and so on down the line. Speaking for my own Staff, records management is considered "something of little significance" or the type thing you "hold off until a rainy day". Everyone is concerned with the tasks they are working on today and evidence little concern over the problems of the fellows who will be here 10-15 years from now. As it concerns records management, the attitude of the Staff as a whole is one of indifference. This is disheartening to records management officers; and from my conversations with several other officers this seems to be a prevalent situation. Until the importance of records management is realized by everyone, from the higher echelons down to the little peons--and until records officers are given the proper support by them--these officers will always appreciate the role they are to play but will never really be able to fulfill it.

b. Records control schedules are supposed to be the bibles of management officers. However, if I were to live by "our" bible, first I'd have to pin a sign on me labeled HYPOCRITE since I know that our bible isn't very truthful. The information contained therein was put there because a report had to be done at a certain date and since no one really knew how to accomplish the task, we bluffed our way through. At this point I'm sure you're saying to yourself, Why don't I do something about it? I'd like to but I don't feel that I am in a position to make judgments on the disposition of official government documents when I know nothing at all about records disposition. Why don't I find out? Believe me, I've tried and not too many other people know much either.

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c. As a result of our hypocritical bible many records have been laid to rest in [REDACTED]'s cemetery which don't really belong there. I can't help but feel that a sizeable amount of useless records, other than mine, are buried in their tidy boxes taking up urgently needed space. To solve this problem a special group should be considered to reevaluate our records holdings and weed out the material that isn't necessary. I realize of course the enormous amount of man-hours, personnel problems, etc., etc., a project of this size would involve, yet I am convinced that it would save us a couple million dollars (for that new building) in the long run. Once we've got our special group we hold on to them and make them the official decision makers as far as record disposition is concerned and thereby solve our problem in Paragraph 2.

d. Management officers should be given the opportunity to attend the various courses (provided they are worthwhile) that are available to them. I am aware of the list of courses which was circulated to the records officers; yet I am positive that if I were to go to my immediate supervisor and ask that I be given administrative leave to attend a 2-3 week course on records management he would say "we can't do without you". If he would only say this at fitness report time! His reasoning I'm sure would be that there is too much work to do and too few available bodies to do it--he is right. At the present time I am trying to wear three hats and all three keep falling off. I think you can understand this problem without further explanation.

2. Solutions can always be found to problems provided someone wants them solved. Without this general support from all around our efforts will be fruitless.

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[REDACTED]
Records Management Officer, IRS

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